A Horrific Bundle of Scary Short Stories

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First Smashwords Edition

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Twas Growl that Woke the Sleeping Beauty

Pillow's light body rested against a birch-barked tree with a smile on their face, immersed in a state of pure peace. A pair of chocolate-colored eyes fluttered open to the sound of a low, faint growl echoing in the distance, disrupting their peaceful slumber. They leaned forward, closing their eyes and rubbing them to rid themselves of blurriness. “What’s that about?” Pillow groaned, peeking their head in the direction of the noise. However, this growl was unlike most. It was a noise they were unfamiliar with; it was unlike any other. The growl sounded…hellish, demonic-like almost. How could something produce such an unfathomable sound? Pillow was hesitant about the idea of exploration. However, a tiny voice convinced them that if they did, they could alert others of the possible danger and plan accordingly in retaliation. Pillow grabbed their left backpack strap, pulling it closer to their form to retrieve the only flashlight that was tucked away. Once they had the flashlight, they zipped up their bookbag and slung it over their corresponding shoulder. Turning on their flashlight, they set forth into the murky forest.

As Pillow continued to walk, the snow chilling temperature caressed and kissed Pillow’s ankles, threatening to leave itself noticeable under the jean’s denim fabric. They were properly dressed but walking at this pace was far from wise, but neither was running. Pillow attempted to merge the two walking styles simultaneously to not disturb the creature and to not make their presence known to the unknown force. What was once dusk turned into an ebony-painted sky as seconds turned to minutes and minutes to hours, the only sign of life from up above were mere sparkling

stars, shining so bright to guide bystanders' home if they so needed. As Pillow walked, an owl followed from a reasonable distance away, hooting softly as it soared deeper into the unknown.

Pillow sighed, occasionally shining the bright light at a reasonable distance away from their face. This was to keep themselves warm, or, at least, that's what they attempted to do given their limited resources. "A campfire would be fitting," Pillow spoke out loud to no one in particular. As much as they'd like to relax by an open fire with loved ones, friends, and allies. Now wasn't the best time…especially in a place like this. Motioning the flashlight under their armpit, Pillow cupped their hands together, bringing them close to their face and exhaling. Afterward, they would direct their hands to their cheeks and place them on their corresponding cheek. This process was repeated until Pillow felt satisfied. They retracted their hands, their right hand grasping the item and continuing onward. It was unknown whether the anomaly grew further away or if they had even come close to it.

As Pillow walked, the breeze intensified. The intensity was like how you would drive a car with your head peeking out the car window, but not as frantic as one might expect it to be. However, one thing that they had in common was that the intensity of the wind shifted from calm to a combination of calm and intense. But this didn't stop Pillow's headstrong spirit from pursuing this unknown entity. They were uncertain about this noise, but curiosity clouded their judgment to a blinding effect. Halfway into the forest, the growl intensified. The growl replayed in their head, intimidating them to a point that their knees began to quiver, their feet cold in the snow. A shiver ran up their spine as they were stunned into shocked stilled silence. Snowfall cascaded from the trees above, landing on Pillow's shoulders, snapping them out of their self-induced trance. "Ah!" Pillow

yipped, brushing the snow off their shoulders, unaware that the same owl from up ahead landed on the branch, causing the snow to dribble down on them.

The owl flew down onto Pillow's right shoulder, getting closer to them, nuzzling their head against Pillow's cheek, cooing happily upon contact. Even Pillow didn't mind the animal's surprise appearance; owls were quite wise...maybe luck had finally arrived for them! It was a calm response from Pillow, hiding their intimidation as they awaited the task ahead. "Come on, little one, let's go," they said. Picking up their feet, they moved forward, hearing the unknown entity make small noises not close to a growl. It seemed like they were getting close to the creature, but it wasn't in sight. As they continued to approach, they reached what seemed to be a…cave. Quite a huge one too, as if it belonged to a bear or a pack of hungry wolves. The mere thought of the unknown started to run rampant inside their heads. Was it prudent to turn back, and stop while they were ahead? No! Never! It would be understandable if one were to return from their journey once they have come this far. But Pillow was stubborn, headstrong, and levelheaded. Nothing was able to deter them from their exploration!

With a gulp, they ventured into the cave, the light projecting from their flashlight to guide them through coated ebony. 'You'll be fine, Pillow. You'll be just fine.' They thought repetitively to themselves, although, it would be more beneficial if one were to speak these words aloud. Their hands trembled, the light reciprocating in response. The owl, whom they called "Hootscifer", hooted in response to calm the young adult down. Hootscifer hoots rhythmically, like a song. Three minutes lasted like five, but they didn't seem to mind at all. "Thanks, Hootscifer. I needed that." Pillow thanked the owl, who only hooted in response. That was the

only way that they could respond vocally. Pillow petted the owl on the top of its head. The owl hooted happily in response, liking the attention they were receiving.

That short moment didn't last, no matter how much happiness it brought the two mammals, they had to continue onward if they wished to make more progress. As they walked, they noticed bones decorating the ground. Whatever this mammal was, they had quite the appetite. However, there was an obstacle that Pillow had to sneak around…how were they able to calculate what this animal was without disrupting it? It would be best to sneak around the bones and adjust the flashlight's brightness to analyze and deduct from their observation. Yeah, that seemed to be the best and most reasonable option as also a means to get out with their life. They intricately crept past the bones, adjusting the brightness of the tool as they sneaked. A shaky silent sigh escaped from their lips, their anxiety growing with every step until they made it across the bones.

"Ah-ha!" Pillow spoke in a silent-soft voice, a grin spreading every corner of their face. "Now, what is it that we have here?" They shined the light and what they saw was something that they didn't expect in the slightest. It was a…baby tiger?! How could something so small make such an unholy noise? To say that they were stunned was an understatement, bewildered was more fitting in this case. The tiger was blessed with beautiful orange fur with black stripes, just like a normal tiger, but this tiger was in stature of a baby. 'But…but what was that noise?' As Pillow thought, a yawn escaped from the baby tiger's jaws, having it be amplified by the cave's intense ambient noises. The owl flew off Pillow's shoulder, flying to the cave's entranceway to bear the noise. Luckily for Hootscifer, they made it just in time to catch the "growl" right-on-time and what do you know, it sounded exactly like the noise that woke Pillow from their slumber. Pillow

felt like their jaw metaphorically hit the floor, they couldn't produce a proper sentence to truly explain what they were feeling but they also didn't know how to express it either. All they could say was that their breath was taken away by this whole adventure. Would anyone believe them? No, not in the slightest. Maybe this investigation was best kept under wraps or a reflection of sorts?

Something that they noticed throughout the duration of their adventure, they felt as if they changed…they didn't know what it was, but the feeling was undeniable. Pillow hurried as quietly as they can away from the tiger as a means to leave it alone and for the sake of escaping and not wishing to test their luck with the cat for longer than they already have. As they grew a reasonable distance away from the feline, they readjusted their flashlight's brightness back to how it was before they ventured further into the cave and hurried out of the cave. Once they made it out, they noticed Hootscifer waiting for them on a single branch. "I'm ready to go home, that's for sure. You should get home too." Pillow spoke to the owl, but they simply flew to Pillow's shoulder and landed on their shoulder, talons careful to try and not hurt them. "Well, I guess you're going to come home with me then." Pillow didn't mind this at all, they grew quite fond of the mammal, but they also knew that a pet was quite the responsibility, were they up to the task? Well, Pillow didn't know but they would give their best efforts. "Let's go home," Pillow stated, and the two ventured back to the small town in which Pillow lived, awaiting their bed and a nice nap.

A Nuclear New Year

The drive-in theater was a place where Fidget hung out with his two friends, Cherry, and Duchess. New Year's Day was one of those days when Fidget could spend time with his friends and have as much fun as they were able to.

It was thirty minutes till midnight, and everyone was having a blast. The cool but calm night air brushed up against them as the stars danced in the moonlight. Everyone was having a swell time; everything went exactly according to plan.

However, as the last short was playing, a cloud of smoke, like that of a mushroom bomb, formed in the sky with a cacophony of moans and groans crawled close to the group. It was faint but as it got closer, Cherry was the first to speak up.

"Guys? I swear, I heard it this time!" She expressed concern and uneasiness.

Fidget brought out a flashlight from his bag and shined it, much to the other watcher's dismay. However, he didn't dim his light as light shined on a dangerously pale-white figure. Their eyes dangled from their sockets and some of their skin was burned from the impact.

"Halloween was a few months ago pal!" A bystander shouted. The figure turned its head slowly, looking at the bystander with no expression plastered on its face. The figure ran towards the man and took a chunk of flesh out of their neck, munching down on their flesh as the bystander screamed.

The effects of the aftermath were evident. The man's skin turned pale, and their posture suffered significantly. As the man turned, more zombies emerged from the bushes, and the screams of the other bystanders piled on top of each other as the other zombies ran towards different vehicles and feasted on their first meal.

Fidget dimmed his light as the group packed up their belongings. "What the hell's going on?!" Cherry stated with sheer confusion and terror. Was this the end of the world? Were they going to die here? "I don't know! I don't like this." Cherry cried as she hopped into the right passenger seat while Duchess closed the trunk of the car.

"Fidget, drive!" Duchess screamed. Fidget didn't need to be told twice about that. Stepping onto the gas pedal, Fidget speeded out of the drive-in theater, with zombies running after them at scary speeds.

Some zombies managed to catch up to the vehicle, grabbing onto whatever they were able in means to hold on for dear life, while some others fell short. "Fidget, they're on the truck!" Duchess cried. Fidget swerved from left to right and this worked… to some extent.

Most of the zombies from the sides of the truck were dislodged but, unbeknownst to them, there was a zombie still intact with the truck, crawling ever so closer to Cherry. The zombie smashed its hand through the glass and attempted to grab Cherry but failed in doing so.

Cherry strayed away from Fidget's car door, kicking the zombie to get them off the car. After some kicks, the zombie flew off and hit the concrete road below. Cars would run over the zombie, killing it instantly.

"We're almost to my place! Hold on tight!" Fidget called, much to the relief of the group. Ten minutes passed and the group had their fair share of zombies for their liking. Arriving back at Fidget's house, the group grabbed

their bags and turned off the car engine before hurrying inside the house as fast as they could.

The group went to the kitchen to grab kitchen knives, unaware of the danger that was awaiting them outside. Waiting in silence, the muffled sounds of moans and groans faded. Fidget peeked his head at the window, seeing the line of zombies trudging away from his house.

The Man on the Other Side of the Door

Knocks, every year at exactly 3:30 PM on November 13th, you hear a system of rhythmic noises on your wooden door. It had been bothering you ever since you have just gotten a new job. You had loved your new job. It had paid well, everyone was okay to work with, although... there were those type of people that were difficult to work with, whatever reason it was, they were still a pain to work with on some occasions. You had stayed in your cozy, suburban house for three years now and those noises would not go away, but today; things were going to be going different. You were going to find the underlying cause of this, one way or another, this mystery was going to be solved and you were going to get your due on this mystery. There was going to be questions that would be left unanswered but, those did not matter, what mattered is that the questions present front and center and you were not going to wait another year to retrieve your answers. A few hours had passed, and the clock was striking ever closer to the half hour and your nerves were skyrocketing at their highest peak. The house was so silent that even the ticking noise was heard, it ricocheted off the walls and it almost drove you to the brink of madness. The seconds handmade full circle and it was now 3:30. The knocks, all you could hear in your head were those obnoxious, rhythmic knocks. Once the knocks were audible, you rushed and jolted the door open, only to find that... a co-worker was on the other side of the door looking back at you. It was Richardson, one of the workers that you tolerated back at the workspace. But why was he here? What purpose did he have for coming here? Was he the person that was continuously 'visiting' you for the past three years? These questions clouded

your mind along with reality itself in a way. "Um, are you okay?" Richardson asked, look of concern and confusion crossed over his face. "Oh, no...no, I'm f-fine. Just-" You paused, what were you supposed to say? That you were paranoid by useless knockings every year on this day and at this exact time? Yes, that does not sound crazy at all. "The workspace really did a number on you, huh? Hey, how about we go outside and have a drink or two?" Richardson suggested, seeing that you were clearly on edge about something, but he just did not know what. "S-Sure, that's fine. I-I have some wine in the fridge, come help yourself." You insisted, moving aside to grant Richardson inside the premises. The house was nice, cozy for a newlywed future family. Richardson walked through the house, his eyes darting all over looking at the variety of directions that coated the walls and shelves of the house. The kitchen was easy to find, being close to the living room. Everything was tidy, organized, and squeaky clean. It was the perfect home. However, there was a reason as to why Richardson was here, and you were determined to figure out what that reasoning was. "Did you find the kitchen okay?" You came from behind, startling Richardson slightly. "Y-Yea." Richardson opened the refrigerator handle and grabbed the sweet cherry wine and two fresh, clean glasses. Finding the corkscrew, he was able to open the wine bottle with some attempts. "Shall we go outside?" You suggested. "Of course." Richardson poured the two glasses full and brought yours to you. "I'll open the slide-door. I will meet you outside. "Right behind you..." Richardsons tone turned in a direction, but one that you did not notice as you were already outside waiting for your guest. Richardson grabbed a knife from the holder and followed from behind. With knife in pocket, he followed behind and closed the sunroom door from behind. Two chairs were pulled out with one already sat down in. It was now or never; it was time for questions to get their answers.

About the Author

Breanna Camp-Sigler is a Novelist who specializes in horror and fantasy. She is pursuing a BFA in Creative Writing from Full Sail University. She has not been published by anyone nor is she a member of any organization(s) however, she is skilled in writing original characters for fandoms that they are interested in.

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